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Canada's Association of Information Technology (IT) Professionals


Resident Bloggers

Stephen Ibaraki
 Industry Analyst
 FCIPS, I.S.P., DFNPA, CNP,
 MVP



Empowering People with Disabilities--Dr. Gary Birch: Executive Director and International Authority/Researcher on Assistive Technologies, Neil Squire Society



control systems, environmental control systems and service delivery programs for persons with disabilities.

Dr. Birch's current professional affiliations and contributions include: Adjunct Professor at UBC, Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering; Adjunct Professor, SFU, Gerontology Research Program; Chair of the Minister's National Advisory Committee for Industry Canada on Assistive Devices; Member of the Disability Advisory Committee for the Canadian Revenue Agency; Member of the Federal Technical Advisory Committee on Disability Tax Measures; Member of the Executive Technical Committee on Assistive Technologies for Persons with Disabilities for the Canadian Standards Association; Chair of the Research Advisory and Review Committee for G.F. Strong Rehabilitation Centre; Member of the Technical Reference Group for the Federal Opportunities Fund; and Member of the Reference Group for the Federal Office on Disabilities Issues.

Discussion:

To listen to the interview, click on this [MP3 file link](#)

Interview Time Index (MM:SS) and Topic

- 00:28: Opening Comment
- 00:36: Can you describe your history and comment on your role at Neil Squire?
- 04:18: What are your current vision, mission and values for Neil Squire today?
- 04:38: What do you hope to accomplish this year?
- 05:58: In May, CIPS president, John Boufford, made a commitment at the Informatics Conference to support Neil Squire. How can IT professionals get more involved?
- 07:12: Can you detail the coalition your Society is organizing for successful technology for the 2010 Olympics? What role is your Society playing with the 2010 Olympics being held in Vancouver?
- 09:18: How are you working with wireless technology suppliers?
- 11:08: Because of your Society's expertise in this area, does that mean your organization can provide consulting services for a number of companies?
- 11:40: Do you have other partners outside the wireless phase?
- 12:22: You mention Microsoft, how are you working with Microsoft and their technology?
- 15:08: What types of other assistive technology have Neil Squire developed? Can you give some other examples?



Barnaby Jeans
IT Pro Advisor
Microsoft Canada

[LinkedIn profile](#)



John Oxley
Director Community
Evangelism
Microsoft Canada



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20:49: You mention funding as an issue in your robotics research and that the funding just dried up. How can companies, corporations and other groups get involved with you and your Society to get some sort of partnership going and to enable some of these projects to go forward?

22:22: Initially from what I understand, a lot of the technology you developed you gave away, but you have changed that model now to support your organization. Can you describe that in more detail?

25:35: What I found interesting is some of the work you are doing on the brain computer interface. Can you give us a brief outline of that project?

30:04: You are in a unique position to see some of the issues that affect the disabled in regards to accessibility. What are some of the big concerns that are facing your society, in terms of technology that are not being addressed?

32:30: You indicated emerging technologies. Can you be more specific and give some examples?

36:15: Do you see other areas like the wireless areas where there are wireless standards you want to change or impact?

37:58: What you are suggesting is that your group should be engaged early on in any kind of development occurring in terms of the marketplace? Your group has the expertise, experience, and research knowledge to help from the ground up rather than later on in the process.

38:55: Are there other issues that you want to talk about at this time?

41:17: You are really calling for action among companies and organizations to look deeper and further at a tremendous resource that you feel is not being utilized right now?

41:54: What has been your experience in regards to government support for your organization and others like yours? Is it a good environment right now? What are they are doing right and how can it be improved?

44:38: How does Canada compare to other countries (ie. UK, Europe, US etc.)?

46:37: There must be some projects that you want to move on but just aren't able to do so at this time because of funding and so forth. Can you name two or three of these projects on which you would like to move forward?

48:50: Gary, I consider this part fairly free form. Are there any topics that you want to address?

50:32: Closing comment

I encourage you to share your thoughts here on this interview or send me an e-mail at sibaraki@cips.ca.

[Computing Canada \(CC\)](#) is the oldest, largest, most influential bi-weekly business / technology print publication with an audience that includes 42,000 IT decision makers in medium-to-large enterprises. For more than 30 years, Computing Canada continues to serve the needs of Canada's information technology management community—you can request your free subscription at: <http://www.cornerstonewebmedia.com/plesman/main/Subscription.asp?magazine=CCA>.

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Thank you,
Stephen Ibaraki, FCIPS, I.S.P.

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Comments

re: Empowering People with Disabilities--Dr. Gary Birch: Executive Director and International Authority/Researcher on Assistive Technologies, Neil Squire Society

Saturday, September 09, 2006 2:28 PM by [Teri](#)

Gary makes one think. I liked the interview. I wonder if MS can do more?

What do you think?

Title *(required)*

re: Empowering People with Disabilities--Dr. Gary B

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